

Darien Human Services Annual Report

2016-2017

The Human Services Department continued to support the residents of Darien this year with a variety of services to promote the physical, emotional and economic wellbeing for all.

The Human Services Department provides a wide variety of services such as counseling, information, referral and assistance. We offer supportive counseling and assessment and case management for any Darien resident and evaluate clients to determine if they are eligible for additional benefits or programs. In addition, the staff provides crisis intervention and assistance with mental health, substance abuse and domestic violence issues and can also provide emergency financial assistance. All client information is held strictly confidential. Residents can meet with staff in our office in Town Hall or via phone or email. Staff will also make home visits if requested. A social worker is also available to meet with seniors every Thursday morning at the Mather Center.

The Back to School Program is a collaborative effort between Darien Human Services, the Darien Unit of Salvation Army, and individual donors. This year, 130 children received a new backpack, school supplies and Payless gift cards for shoes. We are pleased to be able to help children start off their school year on a positive note.

Darien Human Services and Person to Person, provided 231 Thanksgiving meals to families and individuals.

During the holiday season, Darien Human Services provided 269 meals for families, individuals and seniors. Additionally, 166 children and seniors received gifts this year. We were overwhelmed by the generosity of the community. In addition to donations by individuals, Vineyard Vines donated over 200 pieces of new clothing for our clients. Our clients were thrilled with the gifts they received.

During the year, Darien Human Services provides utility and fuel assistance to clients funded by the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program, Darien Fuel Bank, Darien Unit of Salvation Army, Operation Fuel, The Community Fund of Darien and Darien Human Service's emergency fund. We provided energy assistance to a total of 132 clients this fiscal year.

In collaboration with the Fire Marshall's office, we continue to monitor cases of hoarding. We provide ongoing client support and guidance in these cases.

The Blight Ordinance went in to effect January 1st, 2017. The Department serves on the Blight Review Board and assists the Blight Officer with any residents who may require Human Services involvement (seniors, low-income households or hoarding situations in particular).

The Home Goods Closet, which provides eligible Darien residents with cleaning supplies, paper goods and personal hygiene items, has been utilized by our clients in greater numbers. This year we provided 6272 household items to our clients. We are grateful for private donations from various individuals and groups that have helped keep our shelves stocked.

The Resource Library (located in the hall outside of our office) offers a wide range of information on human services and health matters.

Our Senior Resource Directory provides information about town, regional and state social services available to seniors.

We continue to maintain an *Emergency Call List* for seniors and disabled residents who would like a call prior to a storm or town-wide emergency. Calls are also made during and after the storm.